

Peasant honored as a 2001 Laureate for IRSS Project

by Jill Bohn, AFRL Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, Ohio --- The ideas and aspirations of one Air Force Research Lab "hero" have earned national recognition, and will be accepted into the Computerworld Smithsonian Program's archives this spring.

As a project engineer, AFRL headquarters XPZ's Janet Peasant first joined the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory's multidisciplinary human factors team in 1984. Unique opportunities as a member of that research group included a reliability improvement task started in 1992. Peasant realized that this task could literally become the seed to help researchers reuse important raw data throughout the Air Force and beyond. She envisioned a technology that would support broad data access and also allow customization for individuals as well as organizations.

Peasant's idea continued to evolve as others realized the potential and broadened the scope beyond research to the sharing of AF requirements and planning data. Team members from across the Air Force were added to guide the project and AF/XOR chaired an official Integrated Product Team. In 2000, the project was officially named Information and Resources Support System (IRSS).

Today, led by AF/XP and AF/XO, IRSS is a working technology, which brings geographically dispersed organizations together in a collaborative, data sharing environment. Based on a series of replicated and synchronized databases, IRSS supports requirements definition, project planning and tracking capabilities.

"IRSS is a comprehensive way of storing data so that it is useful and quickly accessible," according to Peasant. "It's a robust technology that allows you to express your work in terms that other people can understand and in formats that enable others to find and reuse your data."

The Computerworld Smithsonian has named Peasant among its 2001 Laureates, a group they call "an extraordinary selection of people who are leading one of the most important world-wide revolutions in history."

In April, Peasant will be officially honored at the annual presentation ceremony in San Francisco, Calif. Later that month, five finalists will be chosen for special recognition in each of ten categories (IRSS is entered in the government/non-profit category). The recipients will be announced this June in Washington.

Peasant, who has worked on the project at various levels, approximates that somewhere between 200 and 400 people have



Janet Peasant

been involved with the project over the years. Most recently, Peasant developed the IRSS case study describing these efforts. The case study was submitted to the Smithsonian for its review.

"The success of this project is the result of people who allowed their separate perspectives and goals to merge together over time," she says. "The essential quality of IRSS is team work."

The Wright State University graduate feels that the one trait that has allowed her success is flexibility. Peasant sets out to tackle a project knowing that obstacles can come up at any time. Part of her flexibility is willingness to re-assess resources and take alternate paths to the solution.

In her spare time, Peasant attends many Special Olympics sports activities and the Dayton area TOP Soccer program. Her human factors background and willingness to "accept people as individuals, for their unique qualities" make modified sports interesting from a professional as well as personal perspective, Peasant says. @